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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002481

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2026

TAGS: [PREL](#), [GR](#), [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ALLEGED HARASSMENT OF US FLAGGED YACHT BY GREEK
COAST GUARD

Classified By: Political Military Counselor Timothy A. Betts for reason
s 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) The Greek Coast Guard fired warning shots that struck an American-flagged yacht in the Aegean on April 30, according to MFA Maritime/Aviation Deputy Director General Vakur Gokdenizler. The Greek Coast Guard reportedly objected to the boat's flying a Turkish flag on its mast while it was in Greek waters. Gokdenizler provided us with a non-paper containing the operative portion of a diplomatic note MFA will deliver to the Greek Embassy in the near future protesting the incident (text at para 3).

2. (C) When asked whether this type of incident occurs frequently, Gokdenizler said no. Seven or eight months ago, the Greek Coast Guard fired on another civilian vessel near Lesvos, he recalled. The GOT protested that event as well. Around Imia/Kardak, where most confrontations between vessels occur, the usual practice is for the Turkish and Greek coast guards to cut the nets of the other side's fishing boats that venture near the island. Gokdenizler thought it inappropriate to use weapons and live ammunition in a case involving only a flag, although he admitted that international practice is to fly the flag of the country in whose waters you are located. He surmised that the yacht's captain probably didn't want to bother given he was sailing from one Turkish port to another. Gokdenizler did not ask that the US do anything about this incident, but said he wanted to inform us because the yacht was registered in the US.

3. (C) Begin text of MFA non-paper:

According to the information reported by the Captain of the US flagged motor yacht "EMO", a Greek Coast Guard boat approached and harassed the said yacht around the coordinates 3857N3-02635E6 southeast off Midilli (Lesvos) Island on 30 April 2006 at about 1200 hours while the yacht was sailing from Istanbul to Kusadasi.

It was reported that, following various harassing maneuvers, the Greek Coast Guard boat asked the Captain of the "EMO" to lower the Turkish flag the yacht was carrying on her main mast and subsequently opened fire with a light automatic weapon first in the air and then towards the pole flying the Turkish flag. The Greek Coast Guard boat later left the area.

As a consequence of this act, which is not only clearly excessive and unacceptable in accordance with international law, but also is not in conformity with the good-neighborly relations between Turkey and Greece, the breakdown lights of the said yacht were damaged.

End text.

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